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THE LETTERS OF RICHARD HENRY LEE, VOL. II., COMPILED AND EDITED BY JAMES CURTIS BALLAGH, NEW YORK, THE MACMILLAN COMPANY, 1914, pp. 608.

The present work is the second and concluding volume of the letters of Richard Henry Lee, published under the auspices of the Colonial Dames. In this, as in the first volume, which appeared in 1911, Doctor Ballagh has produced an admirable piece of work. Few new letters appear but the great and greatly scattered correspondence of one of the leading Revolutionary fathers, printed here, there and everywhere or unprinted documents in some collection, are now for the first time really available. Doctor Ballagh's list of rumaged store-houses would take much space to enumerate; among them are the Virginia Historical Society, the University of Virginia, The Shippen papers, the Library of Congress, the Long Island Historical Society, the New York Public Library, the New York Historical Society, the Pennsylvania Historical Society and many others. It is safe to say that few letters of importance have escaped this long and faithful research and that we have, within the compass of two good-sized volumes, what is left of Lee's writings. Besides the vast labor of collection, the documents have been collated with great accuracy.

The second volume contains 290 of the whole 540 letters printed; they extend from 1779 to 1794. Richard Henry Lee, like so many other men of his leisurely day, was an easy and endless letter writer; epistles flowed from his pen like words from Nestor's lips. His regular correspondents included many members of his family and a number of men of eminence, especially Washington, Jefferson, Madison, Patrick Henry, John and Samuel Adams and Henry Laurens. He wrote clearly and enthusiastically on public topics and his sense of humor makes his purely personal letters entertaining reading. They show the character of a thoughtful, ardent man and will go a long way towards softening the harsh judgments which have sometimes been passed on him.

But the letters well as they have been gathered and edited, do not sufficiently fill the need of information on the life of Richard Henry Lee. It is to be regretted that Doctor Ballagh did not find time to write a biography; it is to be hoped that he will do so yet. Surely he is the one man from whom an authoritative life may be expected. After all, letters only throw a sidelight on the career of a politician. While there is much to interest and instruct in what Lee wrote, we are yet unable from his own account, from which, of course, many letters must be missing, to estimate his work in the Revolution. He was a debater and a letter-writer; he was much more a committee worker, a skilful master of political arts, a shrewd judge of popular feeling. The two volumes of letters, however, are a great help to the understanding of Lee and only praise may be spoken of the way in which Doctor Ballagh had discharged his task.

H. J. ECKENRODE.